

## **IDOC Education: Preparing Offenders for Re-entry and Employment**

Indianapolis, Indiana (March 11, 2009) – While the number of people incarcerated continues to increase, the need to prepare these offenders for their release to society becomes even more important. 27,000 adults incarcerated in Indiana are excluded from Indiana's labor force, even though it increases tax and welfare burdens. Additionally, employment is one of the biggest hurdles for offenders upon their release from prison. Because of this, the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) maximizes education and training opportunities for incarcerated individuals to assist them in finding gainful employment and having a successful re-entry to society.

The IDOC is engaged in a study of offenders released in 2005 to five Indiana counties, and, to date, the study clearly demonstrates the impact of correctional education on an offender's successful re-entry. For instance, a released offender who is unemployed is 2.1 times more likely to return to prison, as compared to an employed ex-offender. The overall recidivism rate for those individuals in the 2005 study has hovered around 31%, while the recidivism rate of the degree holders who are working is 17%. Whether an ex-offender is employed is closely related to whether or not he returns to prison, and whether or not that offender has formal education is closely related to him being able to find a job. Indeed, the experiences of an ex-offender are no different than that of the larger community – formal education influences employment and wages.

Unlike some other states, Indiana does not mandate that an offender attend school during his or her incarceration period. Rather, the Indiana General Assembly has passed legislation permitting credit time for the completion of valued programs. During the latest school year, more than 17,000 offenders voluntarily enrolled in the comprehensive educational programs, with almost 6,000 completing literacy, GED, career technical courses, and college degree programs.

The high number of offenders completing educational courses in school year 2007-2008 represents a win-win for those individuals and the state. Those offenders have taken an essential step to reduce criminal behavior and increase public safety. The aggregated costs of incarceration have been reduced through the 1,245,000 credit days awarded for completion of valued programs. Those credit days have generated an estimated \$43 million in potential costs avoided for the IDOC.

### **Media Contact:**

Douglas S. Garrison

Chief Communications Officer

Phone: (317) 232-5780

[dsgarrison@idoc.in.gov](mailto:dsgarrison@idoc.in.gov)